When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do

By Kylene Beers (Heinemann, 2003)

S.O.S.   (A Summary Of the Summary)

The main ideas of the book are:
- Teachers *can* make a difference for struggling readers at the secondary (6-12) level.
- You can diagnose your students' reading problems and then use the practical strategies in the book to address those problems.

Why I chose this book:
This is one of my favorite books about reading. There are some great reading strategies here – for struggling and strong readers alike – that teachers can take with them and implement the next day. Also, Beers does a fantastic job of helping us break down "reading" into its component parts so we can better understand exactly what the reading problem is and how to address it.

Every time I read this book I am encouraged that teachers *can* make a difference for struggling readers at the secondary level and they *don't* have to be reading specialists to do so. The stories she tells about students and teachers to illustrate each strategy make this book eminently readable and enjoyable.

This should be in the hands of every secondary English teacher – ask your teachers, department chairs, and literacy coaches if they want to read it (if they haven't already).

The Scoop   (In this summary you will learn…)

√ *What exactly it is that strong readers do so you can understand what struggling readers need to work on*
   Most skilled readers (including the teacher!) often don't even know what they do when they read.

√ *How to pinpoint specifically which reading skills (of the more than 45 she lists) your struggling readers lack*
   It helps to look over her list of specific reading problems (cannot state the main idea, reads very slowly, etc.) to understand what areas your struggling readers struggle with.

√ *How to* explicitly *teach comprehension, vocabulary, how to make an inference, and many other reading strategies*
   The summary contains over 25 strategies (and the book has more) teachers can use immediately in their classrooms.

√ *How to address the motivational aspects of reading*
   Students who struggle with reading by the secondary level usually just want to give up. Beers shows how to get them interested in reading, help them find the right book, and help them develop the confidence to participate in literacy activities.

√ *How to provide professional development for your teachers so they can better address the needs of their struggling readers*
   See The Main Idea's professional development suggestions at the end of the summary.

Chapter 1: Introduction

When she got her first teaching job several decades ago, Kylene Beers had been trained as a secondary teacher (she uses this term to mean middle and high school teachers in the book). She, like many secondary teachers, never anticipated having to teach her students *how* to read. However, when she entered her first class, half of her students didn't like to read, and half of those *couldn't* read. When the parents of one of those struggling students, George, asked for a parent-teacher meeting to understand why he couldn't read, she realized she had no idea why certain students couldn't read and she also had no systematic way to determine what their reading difficulties were. In response to her dilemma, this book helps secondary teachers learn how to do both: assess and then address the reading difficulties their students face.

This is a crucial skill for secondary teachers to develop because students who struggle with reading, often give up. Beers notes that she does nothing for 186 days a year, in front of peers, that she always does poorly. She gave up tennis and aerobics because the embarrassment she faced weighed on her more heavily than the expectation that she would improve. The same thing happens with kids who can't read. They sit in our classrooms disengaged, disinterested, and sometimes defiant. They *know* they can't read and they've given up. While there is no *one* answer for why these students can't read, there *are* answers, and this book provides a range of ways to address the needs of adolescents who can't read. The book is based on the assumptions that: teachers *want* to help struggling readers, students *want* to be helped, and good reading instruction *can* make a difference.

Chapter 2: Understanding Struggling Readers

Why can't struggling readers read? Initially Beers thought if students could sound out all of the words (decode) and understand what they read, then they would be able to read whatever was put in front of them. However, she has come to realize that understanding what readers struggle with is more complex. She recalls two early conversations she had with George about his reading:

GEORGE: I don't get it. KYLENE: Don't get what, George? GEORGE: The story. KYLENE: What about the story? GEORGE: I don't get it, the story. I don't get the story. It. All of it.	GEORGE: Mrs. Beers, What's this word (pointing to *concerned*)? KYLENE: Did you sound it out? GEORGE: [Long pause.] No. KYLENE: Well, there you go. You need to sound it out. GEORGE: Sound out what? KYLENE: The word. Sound out the word. GEORGE: Huh?

Beers was at a loss as to what to do when George didn't have the ability to identify what was wrong with his reading. These are the kinds of conversations that led Beers to realize that it is complex to deal with struggling readers and certainly involves more than comprehension and decoding. In fact, there are multiple areas that need to be addressed in struggling readers. To begin, it helps to define *struggling reader*. The struggling reader includes more than the stereotypical student slumped over in the back of the class. The key to defining the struggling reader lies in what the reader does when given a challenging text. Beers describes how she struggles when reading the IRS tax booklet or a VCR manual. The difference is that if she must get through the text, she can. That is because she is an *independent* reader who has strategies to help her make sense of a text she struggles with. In contrast, struggling readers are *dependent* readers – they rely on others to make sense for them.

When the text gets tough…	
Independent Readers	**Dependent Readers**
* figure out what's confusing them * set goals for getting through the reading * use many strategies for getting through the text * can make the mostly invisible process of comprehension visible	* stop * appeal to the teacher * read on through * keep the mostly invisible process of comprehension at the invisible level

The goal, then, is not to tell students that they will never struggle through texts in the future, but rather to teach them *how to struggle* with a text. This involves developing patience, stamina, figuring out what's wrong, and knowing what strategy to use to succeed. Teaching students to struggle *successfully* with a text involves understanding the three categories of problems students typically have when struggling with a text: cognitive challenges (struggles with comprehension, word recognition, fluency), negative attitudes (struggling students believe they can't read), and lack of enjoyment and stamina with a text (telling students to "find a good book" and "stick with it" isn't enough). To address these three areas, teachers need to build the following skills and confidences:

3 Types of Confidences Successful Readers Need		
1. Cognitive Confidences	2. Social and Emotional Confidence	3. Stamina and Enjoyment
* Comprehend texts * Monitor their understanding * Determine meaning of words * Read with fluency	* Be willing and active participants in a community of readers * Read for enjoyment and information * Have a positive attitude toward reading	* Develop the stamina to continue reading difficult texts * Find authors and genres that interest them

These three areas are related and as one improves, the others do, too, however, all three need to be addressed.

Chapter 3: Assessing Dependent Readers' Needs

It's not enough to say, "These kids can't read." Not being able to read can mean a variety of things and we need to be more specific in order to help each student. For example, when a student can't read, this might mean the following:

When we say a student can't read, that might mean he or she… (Excerpted from the thorough list on pp.24-26)
• has a limited sight word vocabulary • has few/no strategies for recognizing unknown single or multisyllable words • has difficulty spelling • says reading is "boring" and "dumb" • reads haltingly, one word at a time • does not visualize the text • does not reread to clarify meaning • reads to finish rather than to understand • cannot keep events of text in correct order • does not predict without prompting • cannot answer literal level questions about the text • does not easily make inferences • cannot state the main idea of a text or summarize it • has trouble recalling information from a text • reads very slowly, paying no attention to punctuation • reads very fast, blurring words, rushing through punctuation • does not recognize when comprehension is not taking place • has trouble comparing and contrasting characters, events, and settings • stops reading at first sign of difficulty and thinks "good" readers understand without effort • knows when comprehension is not occurring but does not know how to adjust reading to help • has a difficult time expressing thoughts or ideas about a text in small- or large-group settings

This book is NOT meant to be read cover to cover. Instead it is a handbook to help you diagnose your students' reading challenges and then go to the appropriate chapter to address those problems. The excerpted chart below is helpful in doing this (from p.28):

If a student… CAN call all the words and read at a reasonable rate, BUT has trouble answering the questions, discussing the text, understanding unknown words, and says reading is boring…	If a student… Stumbles through words, tries to sound out words, tries to decode then gives up, reads slowly, misspells a lot, and has trouble with high-frequency sight words…	If a student… Does not participate in discussions, does not believe he is a good reader, thinks good readers are just smarter, is disengaged, and does not put much effort into reading assignments…	If a student… Has good word recognition skills, and appears to understand texts, BUT resists reading, says he can't find interesting books, cannot name favorite authors or genres, and claims reading is boring…
Then this student needs help with Vocabulary, making predictions, comparing and contrasting, summarizing, visualizing, and making connections. **See Chapters 4-9**	**Then this student needs help with** Word recognition, spelling, and fluency. **See Chapters 10-12**	**Then this student needs help with** Gaining confidence, learning how to be an active participant, and learning the academic language of discussions. **See Chapter 13**	**Then this student needs help with** Learning how to find texts that interest him, how to navigate a library, and what resources can help him find reading material **See Chapter 14**

In the book, Beers includes several profiles of students you can read to practice pinpointing specific reading challenges (pp. 29 – 34). Below is an excerpt of a case study about a seventh grader Sharamee discussing a play the class read of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in which she comfortably read the part of Anne aloud.

> BEERS: Do you remember what happened to Anne?
> SHARAMEE: She got this diary. And there's a play. And they hid, you know. She had a sister.
> BEERS: Why do you think her diary was important enough to turn it into a book or a play?
> SHARAMEE: Because, uh, well it's a play, you know, and she wrote this diary, because of the war, and then wrote a play. It was the war. She didn't want there to be a war.

Later, Beers asked Sharamee if she was a good reader. "Oh yeah, I'm real good. I can read real fast. The teachers always call on me to read." Then Beers asked, "When you've finished reading, do you understand what you were reading?" Sharamee responded, "Well, sometimes that part's a little hard." For Sharamee, reading was decoding. She didn't need help with her word recognition skills, she needed help with comprehension. By accurately pinpointing a student's specific reading problems, the teacher can better address them.

WHAT GOOD READERS DO
To understand specifically what struggling readers need to work on, it helps to know exactly what it is that *good* readers do when they read. When Beers asked a class of juniors what *good* readers do, one of her struggling readers answered jokingly from the back row, "Do you mean you think they are good because they are *doin'* somethin'? You mean there's somethin' you *do* to be a good reader? [Laughter from class.] I just thought they were good readers because they just are." While he got a laugh out of the class, his response is typical of struggling readers: they think good readers just *are*. We need to convince struggling readers, like this one, that reading is an active process that requires their involvement. In fact, skilled readers do the following:

- They recognize that reading is done for a *purpose*, to get meaning, and that this involves the reader actively participating.
- They use a variety of comprehension strategies such as predicting, summarizing, questioning and visualizing the text.
- They make inferences about the text.
- They use prior knowledge about their lives and their world to inform their understanding of a text.
- They monitor their understanding of a text, identify what is challenging, and have strategies to improve their understanding.
- They evaluate their enjoyment of a text and why it did or did not appeal to them.
- They know many vocabulary words and how to use the context, word parts, and roots to help understand new words.
- They recognize most words automatically, read fluently, vary their reading rate, and "hear" the text as they read.

Chapter 4: Explicit Instruction in Comprehension

We spend a lot of time testing reading comprehension skills, but little time teaching them. We confuse *telling* students what is happening in a text with actually *teaching* them those strategies to help them comprehend texts. When students are confused, teachers often end up simply explaining what the text means. Instead, if we want them to move from being dependent readers to independent readers, we should be teaching them the following strategies to understand texts:

- clarifying
- inferencing
- comparing and contrasting
- seeing causal relationships
- connecting to prior experiences
- questioning the text
- summarizing
- visualizing
- predicting

While most teachers would agree that the above list of strategies is important, not everyone knows how to teach these strategies *explicitly* and *directly*. As one teacher asked, "Just how could I teach someone to actually predict something?" In fact, many of us don't actively *teach* these skills. Our instruction is limited to, "Don't forget to predict," or "It will help if you visualize." Instead, we need to *show* students how to do these things. One key way to do this, is to *model* how we, the most expert readers in the classroom, use these strategies while reading. We can do this by "thinking aloud" – sharing out loud how we think through those strategies while reading. For example, "Today I'm going to read aloud a bit of the story for you. As I read, I'll be stopping to think aloud so you'll hear how I'm trying to make sense of this story. Today I'm going to practice *visualizing* the action. Listen to how I try to create the picture in my mind as I read. In particular, listen for what types of words help me visualize the text."

To teach comprehension strategies explicitly and directly, here is a simple process you can follow. You can use this for most of the strategies in the book, so it won't be repeated again.

> Step 1: Decide what specific strategy you want to model and what text to use.
> Step 2: Tell your students exactly what strategy you'll be practicing while reading the passage.
> Step 3: Read the passage to students while modeling the strategy.
> Step 4: Give your students several chances to practice the strategy with shorter texts, while you listen and coach them.
> Step 5: Continue to model the strategy with *different* genres throughout the year.
> Step 6: Give students opportunities to try the strategy without your coaching or support.

It might help to understand what teaching comprehension strategies *explicitly* means by looking at an example of some inexplicit teaching Beers did during her third year as a teacher. Over the summer she had gathered worksheets on comprehension strategies, such as finding the main idea, and introduced them to her students. She told them to read the passages carefully and identify the main idea.

> AL: What do I do?
> BEERS: Did you read the first paragraph?
> AL: (Nods.)
> BEERS: So, now you read these options and circle the one that is the main idea.
> AL: Which one is that?
> BEERS: You know, it's the most important one, the main one.
> AL: Yeah, but *which* one is that?
> BEERS: It would be the really main one, the biggest idea, the one that captures what the paragraph is about.
> AL: Yeah, but which one *is* that? How does your telling me to find the main idea help me to know which one is the main idea unless I already know which one is the main idea? How do I know unless I already know?

Beers came to realize that unless she explicitly taught a strategy – like finding the main idea – only the students who already knew how to do this, would be able to find the main idea. It's not enough to provide instructions or simply tell students what the main idea of a particular text is. Instead, we need to explicitly model and have students practice the strategies using the steps outlined above.

Chapter 5: Learning to Make an Inference

As a beginning teacher, when Beers taught George, the struggling student, she gave the assignment to finish reading the mountain-climbing adventure, "Top Man." She asked only one question: Who was the top man? When she asked George he just shrugged. He said, "It didn't say who was the top man." Beers responded with, "You're supposed to make an inference, George, you know, inferencing." George stared at her and then said, "No, I guess I don't know. Don't you think if I did know, I'd just do it?" This is another example of Beers, early in her career, confusing giving 'instructions' with giving 'instruction.' She had never explicitly taught *how* to make an inference. Consider this passage below (from pp. 62-63):

> *He put down $10.00 at the window. The woman behind the window gave $4.00. The person next to him gave $3.00, but he gave it back to her. So, when they went inside, she bought him a large bag of popcorn.*

By making inferences, you see a man and a woman on a date at the movies. Given the change the man got, the tickets cost $3.00 each, so it must be a matinee. Also, the woman doesn't want the man to buy her ticket. He's nice and won't accept her money. So he doesn't pay for everything, she buys the popcorn. To understand all of this, you have to make several types of inferences such as those below:

- figure out to whom the pronouns referred
- decide where this was taking place
- figure out the relationship between characters
- give explanations for events
- decide why the characters were doing what they were doing
- use knowledge about the world to provide details

Students who do not even know where to begin – struggling readers -- will have trouble understanding the text above:

> BEERS: What can you tell me about this passage [about the movie tickets]? [Silence.] What do you think is happening?
> Student 1: This doesn't make any sense.
> Student 2: It sort of does, down here, with the popcorn, then you get the idea it's about going to a movie.
> Student 3: It doesn't say anything about a movie.
> Student 2: No, but they bought tickets and [cut off]…
> Student 4: …Where do you get that they bought tickets?
> Student 1: I don't get it.
> Student 4: Me neither.
> Student 5: What is this: "The person next to him gave him $3.00"?
> Student 4: This is stupid.

The readers don't understand that they need to transact with the text to get the meaning. They think their job is to decode the print, and if the meaning isn't immediately apparent, they stop reading and ask the teacher to explain. Struggling readers need help making inferences. We can't simply tell them to "make an inference." Instead, if we can be more specific by naming and listing specific types of inferences, we can more easily model the strategy so students can learn it. Below is a list of the types of inferences skilled readers make and on the right are comments teachers can make to help students understand the different types of inferences:

Skilled readers make different types of inferences. They…	*Teachers can help students make specific types of inferences by saying…*
1. recognize the antecedents for pronouns	"Look for pronouns and figure out what to connect them to."
2. figure out unknown words from context clues	"Figure out explanations for these events."
3. understand intonation of characters' words	"Think about the setting and see what details you can add."
4. identify characters' beliefs, personalities, and motivations	"Think about something that you know about this (insert topic) and see how that fits with what's in the text."
5. understand characters' relationships to one another	
6. provide details about the setting	"Read this section and see if you can explain why the character acted this way."
7. provide explanations for events or ideas presented in the text	"Look for unknown words and see if any other words in the sentence or surrounding sentences give you an idea of what those unknown words mean."
8. understand the author's view of the world	
9. relate the text to their own knowledge of the world	"As you read this section, look for clues that would tell you how the author might
10. offer conclusions from facts in the text	feel about (insert a topic or character's name)."

To help students learn these different types of inferences, below are some activities:
1. <u>Put up a large poster with a list of types of inferences</u> – By referring to this, you turn the word *infer* into something more concrete.
2. <u>Think aloud</u> – Once a day read, think aloud your inferences, and have students decide what *type* of inferences these are.
3. <u>Do Syntax Surgery</u> – Copy a passage onto a transparency and then mark it up for the class with arrows and circles so students can see how pronouns relate to each other or how you added details that were inferred.
4. <u>Bring in cartoons</u> – Put these on transparencies and think aloud the inferences you make that help you see the cartoon as funny.

<u>Chapter 6: Pre-Reading Strategies</u>

Reading is a process that requires the reader's active involvement. Independent readers get actively involved with a text even *before* they read it. They do this by anticipating what the text is about – they look at the cover, art, genre, title, author, headings, charts, length, print size, front flaps, and back covers. They ask friends, "Is this any good?" They do *something* to find out what the text is about before reading it. However, dependent readers don't do any of this. Sometimes they even skip reading the title or glancing at the headings. They simply begin reading. If we can get dependent readers involved with constructing meaning *prior* to reading a text, they will be more actively engaged in the text. Below are strategies to show them *how* to think about a text before reading it.

PRE-READING STRATEGY 1: ANTICIPATION GUIDES
An anticipation guide helps readers to think about the themes or big ideas in a text before reading it. Below is an excerpt of an Anticipation Guide used by a teacher before introducing *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* – an African version of a Cinderella tale.

Directions: Put a 'Yes' in the blank if you believe the statement and a 'No' if you don't. After the reading, you will revisit your answers.	
Before Reading	**After Reading**
_____ 1. Mean people eventually get what they deserve.	_____
_____ 2. Good deeds are always rewarded.	_____
3. Ignorance is bliss.	
_____ 4. Marriage should be based on love.	_____

By having students agree or disagree about these generalizations related to the theme of the text, we get them to activate their prior knowledge, encourage them to make a personal connection to what they will be reading, and get them actively involved with comprehending the text's themes. If you choose statements without clear-cut answers, this guide should lead to a lively discussion.

PRE-READING STRATEGY 2: TEA PARTY
This strategy gets students to consider parts of a text before reading it. The teacher takes actual phrases from the text about to be read, and writes one on each index card to hand out to each student. Several students can have the same phrase. When students receive their cards, they walk around the classroom, share their cards, listen to others, and discuss how the cards might be connected and make inferences as to what the text might be about. After this, they get into smaller groups to discuss what they've learned from the cards and what they think are possibilities for setting, characters, and problems in the text.

We need to remind dependent readers that comprehension begins *before* they read a text. It is not simply a set of comprehension questions that one completes after the reading is done. The meaning-making needs to occur even before they start the text.

Chapter 7: During-Reading Strategies

Beers used to be impressed when her class was sprawled out all over the room doing independent reading and the room was very quiet. Now she realizes that in addition to very little noise, there was probably very little thinking going on as well. As was mentioned before, dependent readers do not see reading as an active process. This is because they only see the outward signs of comprehension – when good readers correctly answer questions. However, they fail to see the *invisible* strategies those good readers use while reading – such as re-reading, asking themselves questions, and having an internal dialogue about the text. For struggling readers, it is probably more important that they talk about texts *during* reading than after to make these invisible processes of comprehension visible for them. Below are some strategies to help them do this.

DURING-READING STRATEGY 1: SAY SOMETHING
Struggling readers often move their eyes over the words while their minds drift to their social plans and other events. To help them attend to their reading, try this strategy. Groups of two or three students take turns reading a text aloud and occasionally stop to "say something" about what they've read. They can comment, predict, ask a question, or make a connection. Then the reading partners respond to this comment. However, it's not enough to give the vague instructions to "say something." Unskilled readers often have nothing to say. The students need to know what specific things they should try to say. It is helpful to model the Say Anything strategy (perhaps bring in a colleague to do this) and to hang a poster in the room with potential sentence starters like the ones below:

Make a Prediction	Ask a Question	Clarify Something
* I predict that…	* What's this part about… * Why did…	* Now I understand…
* I bet that…	* How is ___ like this ___... * Why…	* This makes sense now…
* I think that…	* What would happen if… * Who is…	* No, I think it means…
* Since ___ happened, I bet ___ will happen	* What does this section ___ mean…	* I agree with you. This means…
* I wonder if…	* Do you think that…	* At first I thought___, but now I think…
Make a Comment	**Make a Connection**	
* This is good because…	* This reminds me of… * This part is like…	
* This is confusing because…	* The differences are… * This character ___ is like ___ because…	
* I like/don't like the part where…	* I also/never (name something that happened in the book)…	
* My favorite part so far is…	* This character makes me think of…	
* I think that…	* This setting reminds me of…	

DURING-READING STRATEGY 2: REREADING
Dependent readers think skilled readers just read something once and "get it." They don't think "reading the same stuff again" will help. We have to show them that not only is rereading a strategy that all *good* readers use, but it is probably the number one strategy they use when they're stumped in their reading. Good readers reread because they believe it's their *job* to figure out what the text means. To get dependent readers to see the benefits of rereading, ask them to read a short text three times and rate their understanding from 1–10 after each reading. Then discuss reasons why their scores might have gone up. Below are some reasons a sixth-grader gave:

> **Reasons a Sixth-Grader Gave for His Score Increasing**
> 1. I slowed down the second time.
> 2. I already had an idea of what it was about. Because I had an overall idea I could see it better in my mind.
> 3. I knew what the problem was and could focus on that.
> 4. I already knew which words I didn't know so I could be thinking about those when I read to find context clues.

Again, it is useful for the teacher to model, by thinking aloud, how to use rereading when a text is confusing. Let the students see how your thinking changes as you read a text for a second or third time.

DURING-READING STRATEGY 3: THINK-ALOUD
This is similar to the Say Something strategy. Students read a text and report out what they are thinking to make sense of the text. If they practice thinking aloud, this will help them improve their internal dialogue when they read. After modeling and having students practice with shorter texts, you can help them reflect on how the think-aloud has changed their reading habits:

OTHER DURING-READING STRATEGIES

Double-Entry Journals

Like a think-aloud, this gets students to focus on what they are thinking while reading. On a paper with two columns they write a passage or a word from the text in the left-hand column, then they write their comment about that entry on the right side.

Sample Double Journal Entry	
What's in the Text	My Response
"Y'all didn't have a piano in that li'l ol' shack, didja?"	She can be pretty rude calling his house a shack.

Bookmarks

Beers created templates for different types of bookmarks students can use *during* reading (the replicable templates are on pp.309-314). You can copy these onto card stock or paper for the students. One has space to write down words they don't know, another has space for questions, on another students record information about characters, and on another students record changes in the setting over time.

Post-it Notes

Post-it notes allow students to "write" in their books. They can flag when they don't understand something or they can jot down notes.

Signal Words

Signal words and phrases are clues when something is going to happen next. Some tell you something about sequence (*later, next*) and others tell you about a contrast (*however, on the other hand*). However, dependent readers often miss these clues. To help dependent readers become more aware of them, consider putting them up on chart paper in the classroom.

SIGNAL WORDS		
Sequence Words	*Restatements/Synonyms*	*Contrast Words/Antonyms*
after, afterward, ahead of, All through, as, before, during, first, second, third…, finally, following, later, now, prior to, subsequently, then, throughout, while	also, as well as, equally, especially, for example, in that, in the same way, just as, likewise, similarly, such as, these, too	alternatively, although, apart from, but, by contrast, contrary to that, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of this, nevertheless, on the other hand, still, then again, yet

For each of these strategies remember it is important to model it *several* times, give the students time to practice it with a shorter text, and help students understand the benefits of using it. Soon the students will understand why they are using the strategies, just as this student has, "All this thinking is really the whole point of reading, I mean, if you aren't thinking it, you aren't reading it."

Chapter 8: After-Reading Strategies

Traditionally, when students finish reading a text we assess how much they have comprehended. However, after-reading activities can also be used to continue to help students make sense of the text. The after-reading strategies introduced below serve to help students with several comprehension skills such as clarifying what confused them, summarizing what they have read, identifying main characters, conflicts, events, and details, and making inferences. These strategies are particularly beneficial for students who struggle to organize their thoughts or who would benefit from seeing information organized in a graphic form.

AFTER-READING STRATEGY 1: SCALES

Like the Anticipation Guide introduced earlier, scales can be used to help students make better sense of a text after they've completed it. Students read statements that don't have clear-cut answers, and decide how much they agree with them like the one below:

> 1. Kenny and his family should not have gone to Birmingham, Alabama, when they did.
>
> strongly agree   disagree   agree   strongly agree

The scale above (Likert scale) focuses on generalizations about characters, themes, or conflicts. You can also use a scale that places opposite character traits (honest/dishonest, brave/cowardly) at different ends and ask students how much of the trait a character has. This strategy, and others, helps students draw conclusions, use the text as support, and make connections to their own lives.

AFTER-READING STRATEGY 2: SOMEBODY WANTED BUT SO (SWBS)
For many students, summarizing what they've read is overwhelming. Asking, "Who can summarize the story?" doesn't provide enough guidance. Instead, it helps to give a more concrete framework as a scaffold to help them develop the skill of summarizing. The strategy "Somebody Wanted But So" breaks down the task of summarizing by asking who the *Somebody* (a main character) is, what the somebody *Wanted*, *But* what happened (the conflict), and *So* (the resolution), how everything works out. They use four columns like the example below. Note that struggling readers are often reluctant to give a summary but this framework makes them more willing and interested in creating a summary. SWBS may be one of the most powerful summarizing tools you teach your students.

Somebody	*Wanted*	*But*	*So*
Mrs. Loisel	wanted to be rich and wanted to go to the dance…	but, she didn't have the right clothes and jewelry…	so bought a dress and borrowed a necklace.

AFTER-READING STRATEGY 3: RETELLINGS
When you ask students to tell you what happened in a story you often get a "stuff happens" response or something that lacks organization, details, and continuity. Instead, we want to teach students to do "retellings" – an oral summary that includes story elements such as characters, setting, and conflicts. It is similar to SWBS above, but this strategy includes a rubric (below) which, after using it repeatedly, helps students improve their retellings. They can chart their progress to see how they improve during the year.

Retellings Rubric	(Excerpted from p.156)
<u>Directions</u>: Rate each item from 0 (didn't include the item) to 3 (completely and successfully included the item). Does this retelling:	
1. have an introduction that includes the story's title and setting? ___	2. give characters' names and how they're related? ___
3. identify the antagonists and protagonists? ___	4. include the main events? in the correct sequence? ___
5. provide supporting details? ___	6. make sense and sound organized? ___
7. include connections to other stories or the reader's life? __	8. discuss the main conflict and how it was resolved? ___

Unfortunately many teachers view comprehension as a *product* not a *process*, so their after-reading activities are limited to answering 50 questions at the end of a text. This approach is particularly damaging to struggling readers who need activities, like the ones in this chapter, that make the invisible process of meaning making more visible.

Chapter 9: Vocabulary – *Figuring Out What Words Mean*

When students don't know a word, the teacher's stock advice is to, "Use the context clues" or "Look it up." Many of us fall back on the way we were taught vocabulary – on Monday you give a list of vocabulary words and on Friday you test the students on their definitions, all of which they forget by Friday afternoon. Beers has suggestions for more *effective* vocabulary instruction. "Effective" means that students learn the words, use them, and remember them. Below are her suggestions.

VOCABULARY SUGGESTION 1: ASSIGN FEWER WORDS AND USE THEM IN YOUR SPEECH
We often assign too many words and we never use those words. If we assign fewer words and *use* those words in our speech the week or so before we introduce them, the students will recognize them and be more likely to remember them after studying them.

VOCABULARY SUGGESTION 2: TEACH WORD PARTS
By teaching students prefixes, roots, and suffixes we give them tools to understand unfamiliar words. While teaching Latin and Greek roots is not a new strategy, there are two suggestions to make this strategy more effective. First, teachers often only teach the roots they want to teach. Consider doing vertical planning to determine which roots will be introduced in which grade. There is a great list of roots you can use on pp. 315-322. The second new idea is to use a graphic organizer called a *vocabulary tree*. Have students draw a trunk of a tree and write down a root (such as *tract: to pull, drag*). Then, in the branches, have students write as many other words as they can that use that root (one word in each branch, such as *attract: to cause to come near* in one branch and *subtract: to take away* in another). In the twigs they write where they heard the word. Let students build on these trees in a vocabulary section in their binders.

VOCABULARY SUGGESTION 3: USE LOGOGRAPHIC CLUES
Pictures often help students remember words. On index cards have students write a word on one side and a picture to represent the definition on the other. For example, they could write *apparition* on one side and draw a ghost on the other. Or they could write *precarious* on one side and draw someone falling off a cliff on the other side.

VOCABULARY SUGGESTION 4: READ ALOUD AND USE SILENT READING
The strength of our vocabulary is not determined by the 10,000 words we regularly use in conversation, but by how many *rare words* we understand. And we encounter more rare words when we *read* than in conversations. For this reason, it is vital that our students be exposed to the written word as much as possible. To help with this, we should continue to read aloud to our students even after elementary school. Research shows that reading aloud builds background knowledge, improves listening vocabulary and comprehension, improves students' ability to visualize a text, and also creates interest in reading. Create a schedule of reading aloud 10 minutes a day to make sure this happens. In addition, set aside time for sustained silent reading. Often students don't actually read in their classes. While some argue that the teacher should read along with students, Beers thinks the time would be better spent meeting with individuals or groups to work on a specific reading strategy or to discuss reading progress or reading interests.

Chapter 10: Fluency and Automaticity

Automaticity is when you do something quickly without much conscious thought. Think of the difference between just learning to drive – thinking about putting the car in reverse while looking at the rear view mirror and slowly accelerating – and how you drive now. *Reading automaticity* is when a reader recognizes words without having to decode them consciously. They recognize words as whole units. For example, they read *window* as one entity, not as w-i-n-d-o-w or win-dow. Reading by sounding out words a syllable or a letter at a time *disrupts* fluency and this interrupts meaning. Note that students don't develop automaticity by decoding, but by repeated exposure to a word they can decode. For readers who are rapidly becoming independent readers, they may need to see a word only ten times before they can automatically recognize it. However, for those who struggle, they may need to see a word *forty* times. This reinforces the idea that struggling readers need frequent opportunities to read at their independent reading level.

Automaticity – recognizing words rapidly and accurately – leads to *fluency*. Fluency involves reading smoothly, at a good pace, with good expression and phrasing. Students *lacking fluency* read slowly, with many pauses, making frequent mistakes, ignoring punctuation, and often in a monotone. To practice both automaticity and fluency, struggling readers need texts at their level.

MEASURING FLUENCY

Researchers typically measure fluency using an oral reading rate. Why is it important to improve a student's reading rate? Imagine a student having 20 pages of textbook reading for homework. If there are 500 words on a page, a struggling reader who reads 60 words per minute will need 2 hours and 38 minutes, while an independent reader who reads 275 words per minute (the average for skilled 9-12th graders) will do it in 36 minutes. It becomes clear how a slow reading rate affects a struggling reader's attitude toward reading. Below is a list of average reading rates for both silent and oral (which takes longer) reading. If you have middle or high school students who fall below these minimum rates, then they need help improving their fluency and automaticity.

Grade	Oral – average words per minute read	Silent – average words per minute read
3	70-120	90-120
4	90-140	110-140
5	100-150	140-170
6	110-150	160-190

Below is a simple way to determine a silent reading rate (see pp. 210-211 for how to determine an oral reading rate). Note that if you can help students become faster, more fluent readers, you will most likely improve their reading attitude and comprehension as well.

Step 1. Choose a book at the student's reading level.
Step 2. Give the student background knowledge and provide a summary.
Step 3. Have the student begin to read the book silently.
Step 4. Stop the student after a minute and count the words the student read.
Step 5. Repeat this two more times.
Step 6. The average of these three is the average silent reading rate.
Step 7. Follow up with basic comprehension questions. If the student can't answer these, the reading rate tells you little.

IMPROVING FLUENCY SUGGESTION 1: IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF HIGH-FREQUENCY AND SIGHT WORDS

Sight words are words students need to know by sight because they don't follow regular decoding rules (i.e. been, does). *High-frequency* words appear so frequently, students need to recognize them instantly. In Appendix G there are lists of sight and high-frequency words. You can have students conference with you and run them through the words. For those words the student doesn't recognize rapidly, have the student make index cards to keep for practice. Then review those daily until the student can say the words quickly. High-frequency words can be reinforced by keeping a word wall, and adding words that students see frequently (*of, a, that*) in large letters. If this sounds too easy for your students, skip it. It's an exercise for students who struggle to recognize *you* in texts.

IMPROVING FLUENCY SUGGESTION 2: GIVE STUDENTS VARIED OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEARING TEXTS

Students need to hear what fluent reading sounds like. You can model fluent reading by reading a few pages of the chapter students are reading, or by reading the first few pages of a text they are about to read. When students listen to a teacher read the first few pages, and they follow along, they complete the story with better fluency and accuracy. Another way for students to hear a text is through *echo* reading. You read aloud a passage and then students read that same passage echoing your intonation. A third way is *choral* reading in which only the students read aloud all together. Afterwards, ask students what they notice about *how* the text was read.

IMPROVING FLUENCY SUGGESTION 3: PROMPT, DON'T CORRECT

When students have trouble with a word, we tend to tell them what it is. This is correcting. Instead, try prompting the student so he or she can decode it independently. Here are some typical prompts:

- Read that again.
- Do you see a part of the word you recognize?
- Can you get your mouth ready to say the first few letters?
- Can you divide the word into syllables and sound it out that way?
- What word would make sense at this point?

Overall, nonfluent readers are usually nonfluent because of a lack of practice with reading. We need to continue to give them as many opportunities as possible to read texts on their level.

Chapter 11: Word Recognition – *What's After "Sound it out"?*

Although most secondary school students do *not* struggle with word recognition, some do. We need a repertoire of skills beyond "sound it out" to help those students who struggle to recognize words. This is a chapter for teachers who have middle and high school students with serious word recognition deficits and who also have time to work consistently with an individual or small group of students over a long period of time. Because of this, the chapter is not included here, but if you have students who fit this profile – their reading problems *aren't* vocabulary, comprehension, or fluency issues, but word recognition issues – read Chapter 11 in the book. Also, for principals who need to better understand the issue of phonics instruction and the role it plays in reading instruction, there is a fantastic excerpt of Beers explaining phonics and its relation to comprehension to parents on pp. 229-231. There is also a list of vocabulary including decoding, phonics, phonemes, and other words that may be useful to know.

Chapter 12: Spelling – *From Word Lists to How Words Work*

Why discuss spelling in a book about reading? Well, as spelling knowledge improves, word recognition improves. The connection makes sense. As children read, they connect sounds to letters, and as they write, they connect letters to sounds. Students who struggle with word recognition also often struggle with spelling. In fact, there are five stages of spelling development that students go through from the emergent (lacking awareness of letter-sound relationships) to the most advanced (manipulating word roots to spell words). Given that students' spelling levels are all different, it doesn't make sense to give *all* students the same spelling lists. This doesn't mean you need to create 25 spelling lists for your class. Most students are on one of two levels (see the five levels on pp.247-248).

WORD SORTS
Beers notes that instead of giving students spelling tests every Friday, we should be teaching them about *spelling patterns*. An effective way to teach spelling patterns is through word sorts. You give students a list of words to sort into categories so they notice the spelling pattern. Below is an example of words students were given and the categories they put them into (there are other word sort lists in Appendix J). They discovered the rules about when to add –*ible* and –*able,* and when to drop the final *e*.

Group 1: terrible, horrible, edible, visible, legible, possible	**Group 2**: believable, achievable, excitable, debatable, notable, observable	**Group 3**: returnable, breakable, remarkable, comfortable, transportable, avoidable

OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SPELLING
<u>Spelling Word Walls</u> – Post spelling demons all students must spell correctly (use the list on p.255 or Google "spelling demons").
<u>Spelling Rules</u> – Make sure <u>you</u> know the most common spelling rules (see pp.346-349 for those rules).
<u>Spelling Patterns</u> – Look for common mistakes your students make and look for patterns. Then you'll know better what to teach.

Chapter 13: Creating Social and Emotional Confidence in Your Struggling Readers

In first grade classes the energy students have to participate is palpable. Hands shoot up in the air to answer questions and eyes sparkle. However, by middle and high school, when peers become increasingly important, struggling readers feel it's not worth the potential embarrassment to join the discussion of reading. It's easier to poke fun of those who like to read or to disengage all together. These students lack the social and emotional confidence to participate in literacy activities. While the preceding chapters have addressed what struggling readers need to develop a stronger literacy foundation – improving comprehension, vocabulary, and/or word recognition skills – this chapter includes suggestions to help students develop social and emotional confidence as readers.

SUGGESTION 1: KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS HIGH
When we see our students struggle with reading, our first reaction is often to make the curriculum easier. However, the students know when their curriculum has been dumbed down. We need to continue to have high expectations for struggling readers. This doesn't mean handing them a book they can't possibly comprehend, but it does mean providing the scaffolding they need to ensure success.

SUGGESTION 2: CREATE A CLASSROOM THAT ENCOURAGES RISK
In first grade, students' names are everywhere (cubbies, walls, etc.) but names are often skipped in middle and high school. Make sure the students know and use each other's names. Also, adolescents have trouble embracing differences, so make sure diversity is stressed in your classes. Finally, be vigilant about not allowing put-downs in your class. Having zero tolerance of disrespectful comments and promoting an understanding of differences is crucial if you want all students to join classroom conversations.

SUGGESTION 3: PROVIDE VARIOUS WAYS FOR ENGAGEMENT
Students often need to warm up before speaking in front of the class. Make sure you have opportunities for students to first have time to formulate their own thoughts (perhaps by writing), then give them opportunities to share in small groups, particularly of their choosing, and then finally encourage them to take part in a larger class discussion.

SUGGESTION 4: ENCOURAGE AN AESTHETIC RESPONSE
Struggling readers often read everything with one goal – to get information from a text (this is called an "efferent stance.") When we ask these students if they *liked* a text their response is, "Do we need to write our answer in a complete sentence?" For these students, reading is moving their eyes over the text. If we want them to be lifelong readers, they need to bring the text closer and let the

conflicts and tragedies in what they read become a part of who they are. We need to help them develop an "aesthetic response" – live *through* a text. However, if all we ever do is assign comprehension questions at the end of a reading, we are not supporting an aesthetic stance. Instead, try including some different types of questions such as the following:

Questions to Encourage a Personal Response to the Text   (Excerpted from a much longer list on pp.271-273)
1. What are your first thoughts about this text? What emotions or feelings did you have when reading it?
2. Did anything in the text remind you of anything in your own life?
3. If you could talk to the author, what would you ask about or comment on?
4. What parts of the plot were the most significant to you and why?
5. If the story were to continue, what do you think would happen next? If you could change the ending, would you? How?
6. Which characters did you most/least enjoy? Did any of them remind you of yourself?
7. If this text were to be made into a movie, which movie stars would you cast in which roles?

SUGGESTION 5: GIVE STUDENTS WORDS TO USE TO DISCUSS THEIR READING
Be aware that struggling readers may be reluctant to speak up because they don't know what to say. They have little experience joining the class discussion, "I just don't know the same smart words as other people." You can help, by giving them some of those "smart words" so they can contribute more than "I liked it" or "It was boring." Put a chart like the one below or hand it out:

Words to Describe the Plot		**Words to Describe Character**	
realistic/unrealistic	good pace/plodding	original/stereotyped	believable/unbelievable
suspenseful/predictable	well-developed/sketchy ideas	well-rounded/flat	well-developed/flawed
Words to Describe the Theme		**Words to Describe the Author's Writing Style**	
important/unimportant message	subtle/overbearing	filled with metaphors/no imagery	original/filled with clichés
unique/overworked	powerful/ineffective	lively, full of action/slow-moving	poetic/clodding

Chapter 14: Finding the Right Book

When Beers introduced books to her students, "You'll love this, it's a great book," she kept waiting for her struggling students to respond with, "*Wow*, now I *love* to read!" Instead, she mostly received a slight shrug. This was because she was sharing books *she* loved to read – with complicated plots and complex characters. Instead, she needed to learn to think like a dependent reader. After listening carefully to reluctant readers over the years, she found the following text features outline what they are looking for in a text:

- Thin books and short chapters
- Some illustrations, especially of characters
- Plots with a lot of action that begins right away
- Nonfiction texts on high-interest topics
- White space in the margins and an open font
- Well-defined, clear characters
- Characters their age or slightly older
- Nonfiction texts with a lot of information in a confined space (like Eyewitness Books)
- Mysteries
- Funny books
- Realistic language

Skilled readers often have an easy time browsing through books to choose one to read. However, we need to do more work to "sell" books to reluctant readers. Below are some suggestions to encourage struggling readers to give a book a try.

SUGGESTION 1: READ ALOUD AND TEASE
While many students tell us they don't like to read, most of them love to hear a good story. Beginning to read a book aloud in a dramatic manner increases the likelihood they will want to continue it on their own. You can also do "booktalks" where you spend 10 minutes every other week introducing the students to new books. You don't summarize the books, you advertise them by giving them a teaser, "What do you do when you find yourself in jail and the warden…"

SUGGESTION 2: TAKE YOUR STUDENTS TO THE LIBRARY
Out of the 64 high school English teachers Beers informally surveyed, none took their students to the library regularly. Libraries are a great equalizing factor in this nation. If we don't take our students to the library *in* school, they will be less likely to go on their own.

SUGGESTION 3: CREATE A GOOD BOOKS BOX
Some dependent readers are overwhelmed when faced with an enormous quantity of books. They don't know how to navigate the stacks in the same way you can't find the peanut butter when you go to an unknown supermarket. Help narrow the choices for them by creating a box with the label "Good Books" to steer those students toward 8-10 high-interest books.

SUGGESTION 4: KNOW YOUR STUDENTS' INTERESTS AND KNOW YOUR BOOKS
To steer your students toward books they might like, it helps to know their interests. Beers spends a few minutes with each student at the beginning of the year and jots down their interests. However, if you don't actually know the books, you can't match those students to appropriate books. Below are ways to learn about good books, and there are over 500 suggested titles in Appendix M.

Review Journals
• *Booklist.* This is published by the American Library Association and contains book reviews.
• *NCTE Journals.* The National Council of Teachers of English offers three journals that contain information and reviews of new books.
• *IRA Journals*. The International Reading Association publishes two journals that provide some reviews of children's and young adult literature.

Online Booklists
• *The American Library Association* provides a variety of booklists such as Newberry Award winners, Caldecott Award winners, Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA), and more.
• *Booklists for Young Adults on the Web* (www.seemore.mi.org/booklists/) combines ALA and other booklists on one site.

The Main Idea's Professional Development Suggestions: HOW TO HELP OUR STRUGGLING READERS
AGENDA for FACILITATOR

I. Understand the Challenges Struggling Readers Face

1. *Think about struggling readers*
Have teachers think of any students in their classes who they believe struggle with reading. Not all struggling readers are alike. How are these students similar or different from George below? Have teachers discuss their "struggling" readers in pairs.

> My student, George, couldn't read. By that, I mean there were many multisyllabic words George couldn't decode and plenty of single-syllable words that caused him to stumble. When he did manage to get through a story, he'd stare blankly at a page as I asked questions. His favorite response to any comprehension question was, "I dunno," said with a shrug and a raise of the eyebrows that said, "Stop asking me questions." (from p.4 in the book)

2. *Defining "struggling reader"* – Beers says even strong readers also struggle with texts at times, but they have the strategies to help them independently make sense of challenging texts. In contrast, struggling readers are *dependent* readers who rely on others to make sense for them. Have the teachers look at the chart below and discuss what they think about this definition of "struggling reader."

When the text gets tough…	
INDEPENDENT READERS	**DEPENDENT READERS**
* figure out what's confusing them	* stop
* set goals for getting through the reading	* appeal to the teacher
* use many strategies for getting through the text	* read on through
* can make the mostly invisible process of comprehension visible	* keep the mostly invisible process of comprehension at the invisible level

3. *Be specific about which reading problems students face*
If we want to help struggling readers, we need to be a lot more specific than "this kid can't read." Below are two charts – the first shows 3 larger areas that struggling readers need to work on and below that are very specific problems our struggling readers face.

3 Types of Confidences Successful Readers Need		
1. Cognitive Confidences	2. Social and Emotional Confidence	3. Stamina and Enjoyment
* Comprehend texts	* Be willing and active participants in a community of readers	* Develop the stamina to continue reading difficult texts
* Monitor their understanding	* Read for enjoyment and information	* Find authors and genres that interest them
* Determine meaning of words	* Have a positive attitude toward reading	
* Read with fluency		

When we say a student can't read, that might mean he or she… (Excerpted from the thorough list on pp.24-26)	
• has a limited sight word vocabulary	• has few/no strategies for recognizing unknown single or multisyllable words
• has difficulty spelling	• says reading is "boring" and "dumb"
• reads haltingly, one word at a time	• does not visualize the text
• does not reread to clarify meaning	• reads to finish rather than to understand
• cannot keep events of text in correct order	• does not predict without prompting
• cannot answer literal level questions about the text	• does not easily make inferences
• cannot state the main idea of a text or summarize it	• has trouble recalling information from a text
• reads very slowly, paying no attention to punctuation	• reads very fast, blurring words, rushing through punctuation
• does not recognize when comprehension is not taking place	• has trouble comparing and contrasting characters, events, and settings
• stops reading at first sign of difficulty and thinks "good" readers understand without effort	
• knows when comprehension is not occurring but does not know how to adjust reading to help	
• has a difficult time expressing thoughts or ideas about a text in small- or large-group settings	

Before the next meeting, ask teachers to have one of their struggling readers read aloud to them and ask the student questions. Does the student read haltingly? Stumble over unknown words? Have trouble answering comprehension questions? Your school might consider creating a checklist of the reading problems above so all English teachers can be on the same page. Also ask the student questions about the 3 confidences above – does the student have a positive attitude about reading? Know how to find texts that are interesting? Teachers can do two things with this information: 1) keep notes about this student's specific reading problems (to bring to the next parent meeting) to begin to address them and 2) share this "case study" with other teachers to get their feedback.

II. Address the Challenges Your Struggling Readers Face

Now that teachers have an idea of what specific problems to look for when conferencing with struggling readers, they need to learn some strategies for addressing those problems. The goal is to teach struggling readers the strategies that strong readers already do independently (even if they don't know they're doing it!). Below is a list of what good readers do:

> • They recognize that reading is done for a *purpose*, to get meaning, and that this involves the reader actively participating.
> • They use a variety of comprehension strategies such as predicting, summarizing, questioning and visualizing the text.
> • They make inferences about the text.
> • They use prior knowledge about their lives and their world to inform their understanding of a text.
> • They monitor their understanding of a text, identify what is challenging, and have strategies to improve their understanding.
> • They evaluate their enjoyment of a text and why it did or did not appeal to them.
> • They know many vocabulary words and how to use the context, word parts, and roots to help understand new words.
> • They recognize most words automatically, read fluently, vary their reading rate, and "hear" the text as they read.

Two Ways Teachers Can Learn the Reading Strategies in the Book
1. Chapters 5 – 12 each present strategies to help students with a different skill (comprehension, vocabulary, etc.) Divide up the teachers so each teacher or group of teachers is responsible for one chapter. The teachers read their chapters and then create a plan to introduce one chapter at each staff/English department meeting so the other teachers can learn the strategies.
OR
2. The facilitator of this workshop presents the strategies in the book by having the teachers experience those strategies first-hand by actually *doing* them in the meeting. Below are some examples of how the teachers can experience some of those strategies.

From Chapter 5 – Learning to Make an Inference
Have teachers read the passage below and discuss in pairs what it might mean. Then have them look at the list of types of inferences below to identify which ones they used AND to show the benefits of teaching students these types and keeping a chart up in the room.
> *He put down $10.00 at the window. The woman behind the window gave $4.00. The person next to him gave $3.00, but he gave it back to her. So, when they went inside, she bought him a large bag of popcorn.*

TYPES OF INFERENCES	
1. recognize the antecedents for pronouns	6. provide details about the setting
2. figure out unknown words from context clues	7. provide explanations for events or ideas presented in the text
3. understand intonation of characters' words	8. understand the author's view of the world
4. identify characters' beliefs, personalities, and motivations	9. relate the text to their own knowledge of the world
5. understand characters' relationships to one another	10. offer conclusions from facts in the text

From Chapter 6 – Pre-Reading Strategies
It would really engage teachers if they did the Tea Party (and give them a chance to walk around). Use the poem in the book, "Grandmother Grace" (on p.367) and the clues in the book as well (p.96). The teachers each have a clue and walk around to share their clues with the goal of figuring out as much about the poem as possible before reading it (see pp.95-99).

From Chapter 7 – During-Reading Strategies
Have teachers practice the strategy "Say Something" by giving them a short text and taking turns reading and then saying something about what they've read. THEN pass out the list (on p.5 of the summary) of the types of comments they can make (make a prediction, ask a question, etc.) and have them try it again to see if it is easier. This will show them the benefit of providing students with a scaffold to get them to *think* while they read and not just move their eyes across the words.

From Chapter 8 – After-Reading Strategies
For the "Somebody Wanted But So" (SWBS) strategy you can ask teachers to think of a book they've taught or one they've read and try to tell a summary of it by using the SWBS format in pairs. (See a SWBS conversation in action on pp. 144-149.)

From Chapter 9 – Vocabulary
Have teachers create their own tree with a root in the main branch, and add as many words as they can think of that come from that root in the other branches. Then do some vertical planning and create a master plan of which grades will teach which roots from pp. 315-322.

From Chapter 10 --- Fluency and Automaticity
Introduce teachers to the definitions of automaticity and fluency (summary p. 8). Show teachers the simple method of measuring fluency and share the benefits of students *hearing* texts read aloud, reading at their independent level, and prompting and not correcting. Then give them a short self-assessment and have them discuss their answers:
   * How often do I give students independent-level texts to read?　　　* How much time in my class do I give students to read?
   * How often do I read aloud to students?　　　* When struggling readers read aloud do I correct or prompt?
   * How often do I discuss with students why I read a certain passage a certain way?　　* How often do I use echo or choral reading?

***Idea – Since this is parent-teacher conference season for many schools, after teachers learn about a number of the reading strategies in the book, consider having teachers share with parents of struggling readers specifically what their child is having trouble with (from the list of specific reading challenges above) AND if you're ambitious, what the teacher is going to do about it. You might even want to have teachers present an Instructional Plan (like the one below) to parents. Imagine how relieved and thankful the parents would feel to know that a teacher is identifying their child's reading difficulties and has a plan to address them!

Instructional Plan for George	(Note this is excerpted from p.27 – see the book for the rest.)
What George Can't Do	**What I Will Do**
• Has trouble decoding multisyllabic words	Teach chunking, recognition of word parts; prefixes and suffixes, syllabification
• Reads slowly, one word at a time, without expression	Work on automaticity of high-frequency words; have him listen to books on tape, etc.
Etc.	

Essentially a cookbook for English teachers, When Kids Can't Read not only offers specific strategies (often involving graphic organizers or outright picture creation, like "Vocabulary Trees" and the "Somebody Wanted But So" chart) for helping kids to see and to understand what they are reading, it also features several chapters focused on decoding skills and word recognition, for those of us with.Â Ultimately, we have to question: are we teaching the material, or are we teaching the student? Instruction must change to fix the problems we have with reading in this country. For me, this title plus her other, Notice and Note, is 70% of what a teacher needs to know to teach reading. When Kids Can t Read, What Teachers Can Do Here, Beers offers teachers the comprehensive handbook they ve needed to help readers improve their skills, their attitudes, and their confidence, Filled with student transcripts, detailed strategies, reproducible material, and extensive book lists, this much- anticipated guide to teaching reading both instructs and inspires. Full descriptionClick here to view ebook https://semangatlead1003.blogspot.com/?book=0867095199.

He's reading so he can be done … not so he can enjoy the text. What's a teacher or parent to do when kids can't remember what they read? 10 things to try when learners don't understand what they read. 1- Know what to listen for. One of the hardest things to do is assess comprehension when a learner is reading a chapter book or nonfiction book you've never read. How can you learn – in just a short conversation – whether or not the student understands what s/he read? Here are some tips. Quickly scan the book yourself, first. It's amazing what you can pick up from the back cover, front flap, and The teachers always call on me to read." Then Beers asked, "When you've finished reading, do you understand what you were reading?" Sharamee responded, "Well, sometimes that part's a little hard." For Sharamee, reading was decoding. She didn't need help with her word recognition skills, she needed help with comprehension. By accurately pinpointing a student's specific reading problems, the teacher can better address them. It might help to understand what teaching comprehension strategies explicitly means by looking at an example of some inexplicit teaching Beers did during her third year as a teacher. Over the summer she had gathered worksheets on comprehension strategies, such as finding the main idea, and introduced them to her students.

When Kids Cant Read, What Teachers Can Do is a comprehensive handbook filled with practical strategies that teachers of all subjects can use to make reading skills transparent and accessible to adolescents. Blending theory with practice throughout, Kylene Beers moves teachers from assessment to instruction from describing dependent reading behaviours to suggesting ways to help students with vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, word recognition, response to text, and so much more. But its not just the strategies that make this book so valuable. Its the invitations to step inside a classroom and Essentially a cookbook for English teachers, When Kids Can't Read not only offers specific strategies (often involving graphic organizers or outright picture creation, like "Vocabulary Trees" and the "Somebody Wanted But So" chart) for helping kids to see and to understand what they are reading, it also features several chapters focused on decoding skills and word recognition, for those of us with.